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Millions of dollars are being poured into southern New Jersey for beach-replenishment projects, but some towns may have nowhere to put the sand.

On Wednesday, the House voted 245-178 to approve the Omnibus Appropriations Act for 2009. A combined \$18,987,375 was secured by U.S. Reps. John Adler, D-3rd, and Frank LoBiondo, R-2nd, for beachfill and waterway projects in Ocean, Atlantic and Cape May counties.

"This is certainly great news for many of our coastal communities, including Ocean City and Cape May City," LoBiondo said.

Municipalities on Long Beach Island, however, have yet to obtain all the necessary property easements for a beachfill project to begin. The islandwide project has been estimated to cost \$71 million. A \$6 million portion of the project was completed in Surf City in 2006-07.

Last year, Congress adjourned without completing the 2009 budget, which delayed the delivery of funding for key Southern New Jersey projects.

Funding for these projects is not final until the U.S. Senate passes it and President Barack Obama signs the Omnibus Appropriations Act into law.

"I will always fight to make sure that our area receives its fair share of federal funding. New Jersey's middle-class families pay too much in taxes to Washington, and I want to make sure that our region is not shortchanged," Adler said.

Ship Bottom is still waiting on 38 signed easements from oceanfront homeowners granting the state Department of Environmental Protection and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers access to their property to complete a beach-replenishment project. Long Beach Township still has hundreds of easements to collect before a project to could come to its beaches.

Beach Haven needs to obtain about 50 easements, and acting Mayor Michael Battista said beach replenishment is the single most important issue that affects the borough. Money is terrific, but the borough needs the easements and wants to be next in line for the project, Battista said.

"What we need to get is certainly within reach. We have to follow through in getting all those easements and we are doing that," Battista said. "We're in competition with every other town on the island, and \$11.7 million is just what they've appropriated this year. I want that \$11 million - I want it."

The borough recently formed a group to help collect easements that will focus on the safety aspect of pushing the project through. The team includes borough emergency management coordinators Bev Kochik and Bill Tromm; police Chief Kevin Kohler; borough engineer Frank Little; borough Administrator Rich Crane; and President of the Beach Haven Volunteer Fire Company John Hillman.

Battista said Hillman also owns the Engleside Inn and has signed his easement.

"We want to be proactive in dealing with the largest threat to the property and health of the people in our town we don't want to be the next New Orleans," said Battista.

Harvey Cedars Mayor Jonathan Oldham also worries about becoming the next New Orleans if a storm were to strike. Beaches in this small town on LBI were ravaged last year during a rare Mothers Day northeaster and continue to erode at a rapid rate. The borough is in the midst of an eminent-domain battle with oceanfront homeowners to collect eight remaining easements to save the sand.

Oldham said the borough's leg of the project totals approximately \$22 million.

"We're pretty much set with money but we may benefit if the dredge is here and in the event the bid comes in too high it could finish up my town," Oldham said.

Oldham said he is traveling to Washington, D.C., on March 12 to lobby for more funding to support remaining towns for the island-wide beachfill project.

Adler said he helped secure \$16.7 million in funding for his district, including \$11.7 million toward a beachfill project on Long Beach Island. LoBiondo has secured \$10.4 million in federal funding for local beach-replenishment and construction projects in New Jersey's 2nd District, including \$2,967,000 for beach renourishment in Ocean City's north end from Great Egg Harbor to Peck Beach.